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not desire the self as an opportunity for intoning the blessed words "I am I," but rather as a center from which to interpret and to develop a real and moral world order.

Our philosophical standpoint must meet the acid test: does it justly interpret life as a whole? Does it envisage all the facts? Does it make all the facts intelligible? No philosophy of the past decade, nor of any decade, comes out unscathed from this test. Our study may direct attention to the efforts of idealism to meet the conditions of the test. If we look ahead in the light of the recent history of thought, we may venture the opinion that the outlook for idealism, and for personalism in particular, is by no means unfavorable.

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THE LESSER HIPPIAS

AMONG the least fortunate of the dialogues of Plato in the attention it has received from the critics and historians of Greek philosophy, is the *Lesser Hippias*. As misfortunes go, this is not a great one. Few, if any, of the writings of Plato are of less importance than the *Lesser Hippias*. The world would not be appreciably poorer if it had never been written or had passed into an early oblivion.

The fact remains, as I hope to make clear, that this little dialogue has been grossly misappreciated and misunderstood. And though the dialogue is unimportant, the misunderstanding is not; for it is a symptom of misunderstandings of greater scope and moment. There is nothing especially abstruse in the *Lesser Hippias*. Its general construction and its procedure in detail are simplicity itself. There is nothing in it beyond the comprehension of an intelligent boy of fifteen. When such a document is misread by men of considerable philosophical and philological attainments, a far-reaching cause is presumable.

As a fair example of what the commentators have done with the dialogue, the following, from the judicious Raeder, may serve:

"Hippias, who values the honorable Achilles more highly than the lying Odysseus, is forced by Socrates to admit that in lying ability (*δύναμις*), insight (*φρόνησις*), knowledge (*ἐπιστήμη*), and wisdom (*σοφία*) are involved (365 D-E). Whereas in the *Io* (531 D ff.) it is said that the expert knows how to judge both those who speak correctly and those who speak falsely, the point is here (366 C ff.) that he who knows the truth is by virtue of that very fact able to

assert the false—*i. e.*, to lie—if he wishes, with the greatest certainty, while the ignorant man runs the risk of speaking the truth by mistake. Accordingly, one who lies intentionally is superior to one who speaks the truth by mistake;¹ and this assertion can, of course, easily be extended from lying to injustice in general. For when it is granted that justice rests either on ability or on knowledge or on both together, it is evident that if a bad action is committed by a man who has ability and knowledge, the action must spring from his ability and skill, and be intentional; while if one does wrong unintentionally those characteristics are lacking to him.

“That this thesis is advanced as a conscious paradox, is seen at the end of the dialogus, where the hypothetical expression appears, that he who does wrong intentionally, *if indeed, there be such a one*, can be no other than the good man (376 B). For, according to the Socratic-Platonic doctrine, voluntary wrong-doing is impossible, as is also presupposed in the *Apology* (25 D–26 A).”²

Now, to begin with, Hippias is *not* forced by Socrates to admit that ability, insight, knowledge, and wisdom are involved in lying. He states all this freely. It constitutes, if you please, *his* thesis; it is exactly the position which Socrates proposes to criticize by pointing out some of its consequences.

In his lecture Hippias has said that Homer depicted Achilles as the bravest of the men who went to Troy, Nestor as the wisest, and Odysseus as the craftiest (or wiliest)—using this last term (*πολυτροπώτατος*) as if it had an evil connotation (which in Homer, of course, it has not). In reply to Socrates’s request for an explanation, he declares that he understands “crafty” to be equivalent to “deceitful” (*ψευδής*). This is the point of departure of the formal discussion: the identification by Hippias of the extraordinary resourcefulness of Odysseus with deceitfulness.

The discussion begins: “*Soc.* Are deceivers, according to you, characterized by being unable to do something—like the sick—or by being able to do something? *Hip.* By being able, I should say, very able indeed, especially in hoodwinking men.” Now Raeder, like the commentators generally, overlooks the fact that no Socratic philosopher could possibly accept as true an affirmative answer to this question. According to the Socratic way of thinking, the correct answer should be: “They are characterized by weakness and inability, and it is this that makes them deceitful.” Compare the striking passage in the *Gorgias* (469 D–470 A), in which Socrates comments on Polus’s definition of tyranny as “the power of doing

¹ Let it be remarked in passing that this particular comparison does not occur in the dialogue.

² *Platons philosophische Entwicklung*, p. 94 f.

whatever seems good to you in a state, killing, banishing, doing in all things as you like." "Suppose [says Socrates] that I go into a crowded Agora, and take a dagger under my arm. Polus, I say to you, I have just acquired rare power, and become a tyrant; for if I think that any of these men whom you see ought to be put to death, the man whom I have a mind to kill is as good as dead; and if I am disposed to break his head or tear his garment, he will have his head broken or his garment torn in an instant. Such is my great power in the city. . . . But can you believe that this mere doing as you think best is great power? . . . And you would admit once more, my good sir, that if, when a man does as he pleases, his actions turn out to his advantage, it is a good thing, and this, it seems, is what it is to have great power; and if not, then it is an evil thing, and it is to have little power."³ It is in accordance with this principle that the Socrates of the *Gorgias* argues that "successful" injustice is the worst of evils.

In the *Lesser Hippias*, then, the answer that Socrates's question calls for is exactly the opposite of that which Hippias gives. The latter thinks that the deceiver is made what he is by a peculiar ability. The former would hold that all the ability which the deceiver possesses is perfectly consonant with the most entire veracity; and he maintains explicitly that, *on Hippias's assumption*, no distinction between the honest man and the deceiver can be made out. But before proceeding to the demonstration of this proposition, he takes time to emphasize and clarify the assumption itself. Let us glance over this part of the dialogue, and annex to the replies of Hippias those which, on Socratic-Platonic principles, are alone correct.

"*Soc.* They [the deceivers] are powerful, then, it seems, as well as crafty, are they? *Hip.* Yes. (*On the contrary, they are weak.*) *Soc.* Are they crafty and deceitful by reason of silliness and folly, or by reason of cunning and a certain prudence? *Hip.* By reason of cunning and prudence, most assuredly. (*By reason of the most deplorable silliness and folly.*) *Soc.* They are prudent, then, I suppose? *Hip.* Yes, by Zeus, very much so. (*No, indeed.*) *Soc.* Being thus prudent, are they ignorant of what they do, or do they know? *Hip.* They know very well, and that is why they do mischief. (*They know not what they do, and that is why they do mischief.*) *Soc.* Knowing, then, what they know, are they ignorant or wise? *Hip.* They are wise in this respect at any rate—in practising deceit. (*They are ignorant, in this respect at any rate.*)

The *Gorgias* again provides the best commentary. Says Socrates (474 B): "For I hold that you and I and all other men believe

³ Jowett's translation, slightly altered in accordance with the text of Burnet.

that to do injustice is a greater evil than to suffer it, and that not to be punished is a greater evil than to be punished." In a very obvious sense this is, of course, not only paradoxical but false, as the instant denial of Polus sufficiently proves: "And I hold that neither I nor any other man believes that." There is no question of Polus's sincerity. But Socrates's point is that Polus, like other insufficiently reflecting men, is ignorant as to what it is to do injustice—that is to say, what it amounts to as a condition of the unjust agent—and that if he knew this, and were really in a position to choose, he would certainly prefer to be injured rather than to injure.

Socrates gives Hippias—and Plato gives the reader—every chance to put himself right. The whole contention, the absurdity of which he is to show, is summarized in a single direct question; "Do you say that deceivers are powerful and prudent and knowing and wise with respect to the matters in which they are deceitful?" And this question is again subjected to the process of definition: "In a word, deceivers are wise and able to deceive. . . . And a man unable to deceive and ignorant would not be a deceiver. . . . And able [powerful] is he who does what he wishes, when he wishes it." The assent of Hippias leaves only one conclusion open, which is that which Socrates proceeds to draw. And Socrates's argument is essentially sound; that is to say, while it is exposed to certain objections, these objections can all be met in a manner sufficiently indicated in the argument as given.

For what ability has the deceiver to distinguish him from the man who tells the truth? Hippias and Socrates consider only such ability as depends on the knowledge of the matter in hand; and this limitation is unquestionably Socratic. But if we urge that the deceiver is distinguished, say, by the ability to disguise his feelings, that may, indeed, characterize him as over against other dishonest men; but it hardly accounts for his dishonesty. And, furthermore, the disguising of one's feelings—for example, of one's personal interest in a matter—may be just as necessary for persuading a man of truth as for leading him into error.

It is more important for our present purpose, however, to emphasize the fact that the conclusion of this part of the dialogue—namely, that the truth-teller and the deceiver are identical—is dependent upon the premises which have been set forth at so great length, and which represent Hippias's view—or, shall we say, the common-sense view?—*not* that of Socrates.

The dialogue has a second part, introduced, like the first, by a brief discussion of Homer. Socrates points out that, to judge from

Homer's account, the naïve and passionate man is at least as likely to resort to untruthfulness as the "man of many devices." In the lay of the *Prayers* (*Iliad IX*), for example, Achilles lies repeatedly and shamelessly, while Odysseus utters no word of anything but perfect truth. To this Hippias objects that whereas Achilles lies from mere simplicity of heart, Odysseus does so with full intent. Whereupon Socrates replies that *on the basis of their previous discussion*⁴ he would have to hold that those who do wrong involuntarily are worse than those who do wrong voluntarily; and the remainder of the dialogue is devoted to the demonstration of this point.

To revert to Raeder, let us note that nothing could be more misleading than, without qualification, to attribute to Socrates the doctrine that voluntary wrong-doing is impossible. Raeder says that this is presupposed in the *Apology*. He alludes, of course, to the passage (25 C–26 A) in which Socrates declares that if he has corrupted his young fellow-citizens he has done so unintentionally, and so ought not to be punished. This is held to rest upon the (tacit) premise that all wrong-doing is similarly unintentional. I have dealt with this matter in another place; but a brief repetition may be pardoned. As a matter of fact, Socrates makes use of no such general premise, but cites a special reason to show that in his own case the wrong-doing (if it has occurred) was not intended. He concedes that if he had intended it he would deserve to be punished, but maintains that as matters stand he deserves nothing worse than to be instructed. Was it a Socratic-Platonic doctrine that punishment should be abolished? Every reader of the *Gorgias* (to go no farther) knows that this is not so; and the *Apology* itself implies no such doctrine. What it does imply is that there is intentional as well as unintentional wrong-doing; and it maintains, in perfect accordance with common sense, that only the former calls for punishment.

It is true that in the *Apology*, as in the *Gorgias* and *Protagoras*, it is assumed (or declared) that no man ever willingly injures himself; more explicitly, that every man at all times chooses for himself what appears to him to be the best of the given alternatives. This appearance, however—especially under the distorting influence of the

⁴ "For I think, Hippias, the very opposite of what you say: that those who injure men and are unjust and lie and deceive and do wrong voluntarily, and not involuntarily, are better than those who do so involuntarily. Sometimes, however, the opposite opinion appeals to me, and I am all at sea about this—clearly on account of my ignorance. And just now a crisis of my will, so to speak, has come round, in which it seems to me that those who do wrong in any matter voluntarily are better than those who do it involuntarily. And I regard my present condition as due to our previous discussion."

passion of the moment—is often false. One great advantage of knowledge over mere opinion is that it is unaffected by passion; and hence if a man knows what is best for himself he will always choose it. It is also Socratic-Platonic doctrine that justice is always for the good of the agent, while injustice always redounds to his hurt. A man who knew this to be true would, of course, never do anything which at the time seemed to him to be unjust. He would commit no intentional injustice. But it is clear that most men are not so wise; and hence they may, and do, commit intentional injustice; and there is no question but that they are inferior to those few men who commit injustice only unintentionally.

It is further true that there is a sense in which all evil-doing, because it depends on ignorance, is involuntary; that is to say, no wrong-doer ever includes in his intention all that the act necessarily and essentially involves. If we say, as Socrates is sometimes represented as putting it,⁵ that a man prefers only what he would with complete foreknowledge prefer, then indeed no man does evil voluntarily.

But if we apply this conception of the matter—as, indeed, we are bound to do—to the *Lesser Hippias*, we get in this way no sufficient explanation of Socrates's argument and contention. The hypothetical phrase at the close, which Raeder cites (*εἰπέ τις ἔστιν οὗτος*) is undoubtedly intended to suggest an interpretation according to which the question under discussion would disappear. But the whole of the previous argument is thereby left intact. The question still remains whether voluntary wrong-doing—in the sense in which that does occur—is better or worse than involuntary. And the contention of Socrates, that the proposition that voluntary wrong-doing is better follows logically from Hippias's assumptions, remains unaffected.

Socrates's argument is, again, essentially sound. If vice is characterized by knowledge and power, then on those terms it is well to be vicious. The educated modern reader will probably be more fertile than Hippias in objections to various points in the argument; but if he bears in mind the general principle he will have no difficulty in answering his own objections.

The *Lesser Hippias* is one of those dialogues which, on the ground of inferiority of style and contents, has had the genuineness of its Platonic authorship seriously questioned—this in spite of critical mention by Aristotle (*Meta.* 1025a 5). If not Plato's it belongs to the first generation of his disciples. But there is no real reason for doubting that it is Plato's own. The doctrine throughout is typically Socratic. The trivial blunders and wanton trifling

⁵ Compare, for example, the passage in the *Gorgias* (474 B), cited above.

with logic, which the critics have found in it, disappear when the distorting preconceptions are removed. The style is well worthy of the rather slight subject-matter, and is typically Platonic. It is not easy to prove a proposition such as this last; and that need not be attempted here. One point, however, may be briefly mentioned in conclusion.

Plato was very fond of a certain parallelism between his characters and the theses which they defend. The *Charmides* and the *Laches*, for example, exhibit this feature with great clearness. But in none of the dialogues is the parallelism more striking than in the *Lesser Hippias*. It is not Achilles alone, but Hippias also, that is simple-minded and impulsive, and because of his impulsiveness and lack of reflection contradicts himself. And it is not Odysseus so much as Socrates that is the "man of many devices," who deliberately and voluntarily speaks the truth which he knows, but who also—let Hippias be our witness—"always stirs up confusion in the argument and seems to be acting dishonestly."

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REVIEWS AND ABSTRACTS OF LITERATURE

The Foundations of Music. HENRY J. WATT. Cambridge: The University Press. 1919. Pp. xiii + 239.

What Dr. Watt has attempted in this volume, as in his earlier *The Psychology of Sound*, is a realistic examination, in a scientific spirit, of the actual phenomena of musical audition, and an explanation and, to some extent, an interpretation of them, in psychological terms. In the first ten chapters he sets forth his theories that all musical tones are volumes, conterminous at the upper end, and having their pitch points in the middle, and that intervals are felt as volumic proportions. This part seems to a layman in acoustics to present some features with difficulty reconcilable with the accepted results of Helmholtz and others, but is certainly suggestive and plausible from a purely musical standpoint. In the next half dozen chapters the author collates and analyzes the statements of musical theorists regarding "consecutive" intervals, especially fifths and octaves. This part of the discussion is interesting not only for the thoroughness and shrewdness with which he collects and comments upon the divers reasons heretofore offered by theorists to explain these *bêtes noires* of all harmony students, but particularly for the ingenuity of the collation and the unavoidable way in